

# Feasibility of School District Services Consolidation

OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Project Scope

December 2007

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Idaho currently has 115 school districts and a growing number of charter schools, including virtual schools. In 2006, school districts spent over \$2 billion for education and related activities. School district expenses include costs for instructing students, providing support services and administrative functions, transportation, facilities maintenance, and food service. School districts generally provide these services directly or have contracts in place for these services.

Following a request from Representative Durst, with supporting letters from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee directed the Office of Performance Evaluations to conduct a study of the consolidation of school district services. This study will focus on the types of services school districts provide and the amounts and costs of these services. The study will also focus on the feasibility of consolidating services, and the potential impacts of consolidation. In order to maintain a manageable project scope, this study will not focus on instructional staff (e.g., teachers or assistants), administrators (e.g., principals or superintendents), or school boards.

This evaluation, to be conducted in two steps, will focus on the following:

**Step One.** *The first part of our study will help us identify the types of school district services that would most benefit from additional review:*

- What types of services do Idaho schools districts provide or purchase? What percent of a school district's annual expenditures is spent on these services? What percent of the state's public education spending do these services represent?
- From stakeholders' perspectives, do Idaho school districts currently purchase or provide services that could be considered for consolidation? What efforts have Idaho school districts already made to consolidate services?

**Step Two.** *The second part of our study will involve a more in-depth analysis of consolidation efforts and provide recommendations about the feasibility of consolidating the school district services identified in the first part of our study:*

- How have other states approached consolidation of school district services? What have been the outcomes of those efforts? Are there best practices related to the consolidation of services? Are there generally accepted criteria for consolidation? Are any of these options feasible for Idaho?

- If consolidation of services is feasible in Idaho, what are the potential impacts of such consolidation? Do state laws and rules provide incentives or disincentives for consolidation of services?

**Projected completion date: Winter 2009**